

REMARKS

The following remarks address the issues outstanding from the Advisory Action dated January 9, 2008. Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration of this application for the reasons discussed below.

Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's constructive suggestions offered during the telephone interview with Applicants' counsel on January 22, 2008. The substance of the interview is incorporated in these Remarks, which are offered in response to the Examiner's request that Applicants provide a more complete explanation of support for the amendment made to the specification in the Amendment After Final Rejection dated December 20, 2007.

In the Amendment After Final Rejection, Applicants amended the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 10 to read as follows:

A stopper plate 3 having a cut-away portion 2 which is open outward in the radial direction and a disc-shaped elastic member 4 are secured to the steering shaft 1, while a flange 5 of the yoke 11 is ~~attached to~~ supported on the shaft 1 through a bush 6.

The foregoing structure, in which the yoke 11 is supported on shaft 1 through bush 6 is clearly shown in Applicants'

drawings (see FIG. 2A, for example). Indeed, it is apparent that the flange is not fixedly attached to the shaft. One of ordinary skill in the art would readily appreciate that the structure must provide for relative rotation between shaft 1 and yoke flange 5 through bush 6 in order for the structure to transmit torque as described -- that is, for torque to be transmitted from shaft 1 to yoke 11 through elastic member 4 in a range with low torque, and through pin 8 brought into contact with cut-away portion 2 of stopper plate 3 in a range with high torque. See, e.g., page 9, line 26 through page 10, line 8 of the specification as originally filed.

Applicants note that the prior art device of FIG. 7A was similarly described as having a structure in which yoke flange 5 is "attached" to shaft 1 through bush 6. See page 2, lines 2-6 of the specification as originally filed. Again, one skilled in the art would readily recognize that the structure of FIG. 7A does not contemplate a fixed attachment of the components, but rather allows for relative rotation of yoke flange 5 and shaft 1 through bush 6 in a manner as discussed above. Applicants presume that Office did not intend to contend that the prior art is inoperative.

In view of the above discussion, Applicants respectfully submit that the previous amendment to the

specification is fully supported by the application as originally filed and therefore does not constitute new matter.

It is therefore respectfully requested that the Amendment After Final Rejection now be entered, that the outstanding rejections be withdrawn, and that this application be passed to issue accordingly.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge to Deposit Account No. 50-1165 (XA-10281) any fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17 that may be required by this paper and to credit any overpayment to that Account. If any extension of time is required in connection with the filing of this paper and has not been separately requested, such extension is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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